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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 19 MAY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government and further to the letter addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, on 15 May 1997 (S/1997/376, annex), I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 18 May 1997 from the Minister giving further detailed information concerning the Turkish incursions into the territory of Iraq and the violations of its airspace that began on the night of 13/14 May 1997.

The letter again calls upon the United Nations to meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and to halt the intimidation and aggression to which Iraq is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Identical letters dated 18 May 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Further to my letter of 15 May 1997 concerning the fresh incursions into the territory of the Republic of Iraq carried out by Turkish armed forces on the night of 13/14 May 1997 (S/1997/376, annex), I should like to provide you with the additional detailed information set forth hereunder, the incursions in question having been carried out along three lines of advance.

1. One line of advance was from the Çağırca and Üzümlü areas of Turkey in the direction of the Kani Masi area, which is inside Iraq's international boundaries.

2. A second line of advance was from the Cevizli and Damlaca areas of Turkey in the direction of the Bahnunah, Sanat and Ufkuzi areas, which are inside Iraq's international boundaries.

3. A third line of advance was from the Silopi area of Turkey in the direction of the Faysh Khabur, Zakho, Darkar Ajam, Sindi, Batufah and Bikufah areas, which are inside Iraq's international boundaries.

4. Turkish fighter aircraft and helicopters participated in support of the invading Turkish ground forces and bombarded civilian areas inside Iraq's international boundaries, causing loss of life among Iraqi civilian residents of the area and damage to their property.

5. Between 0917 and 1947 hours on 14 May 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft violated the airspace of the Republic of Iraq with eight sorties, carried out by four two-aircraft formations. This aerial activity was centred on the Zakho, Dohuk, Amadiyah and Pibu areas, which are inside Iraqi airspace.

6. At 1330 hours on 15 May 1997 six fully loaded, covered Turkish trucks entered Iraqi territory in the Dayrabun area.

7. At 1615 hours on 15 May 1997 two helicopters coming from beyond Mount Bahir entered Iraqi territory. They landed in the Dayrabun area to the east of Faysh Khabur, and they left the area at 1800 hours on the same day.

8. Between 1301 and 2118 hours on 16 May 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft violated the airspace of the Republic of Iraq with 10 sorties carried out by five two-aircraft formations. This aerial activity was centred on the Amadiyah, Sarsank, Atrush, Shaykhan, Pibu, Qush and Mosul East areas.

In conveying to you the details of this new incursion and of these violations by the Turkish armed forces, the Government of Iraq expresses its condemnation of such acts of military aggression. It does so because the practices of the Turkish forces, as represented by their repeated shelling of towns and villages in Iraq and their unlawful incursions into Iraqi territory,

are in flagrant violation of Iraq's sovereignty and the inviolability of its territory and airspace, just as they are incompatible with relations of good-neighbourliness, the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the 1926 Iraq-Turkey boundary agreement. These practices may also undermine stability in the region as a whole, which is suffering primarily from the anomalous situation created by the United States of America and its allies in northern Iraq.

As stated in my previous letter, the Turkish Government bears full international responsibility for the acts of aggression it commits inside Iraqi territory and for all their consequences, regardless of the alleged reasons it gives.

The Government of Iraq reserves its legitimate right under international law to determine an appropriate response to such brutal military aggression and to seek compensation for the damage caused by these Turkish violations of Iraq's territory and airspace and for the human suffering inflicted on Iraqi citizens by these acts of aggression. Through you, it renews its call to the Government of Turkey to reconsider its policy with respect to the situation in northern Iraq, to promote the collaboration of the two countries on the basis of considerations of good-neighbourliness and mutual respect for sovereignty and to eliminate the reasons for the persistence of a situation that jeopardizes the interests of both countries.

As, through you, I reiterate my country's call to its Turkish neighbour to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, I express the hope that the United Nations will meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and that it will halt the intimidation and aggression to which my country is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq